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ABSTRACT

This study extended those of Goldberg (1968) and Pheterson, Kiesler, and Goldberg (1971). College students (57 females and 39 males) were given booklets containing articles from fields of traditional male, female, and neutral sexual association for evaluation. Authors of the articles were portrayed as either males or females, and as either students (attempting to accomplish) or holders of advanced degrees (accomplished). The main effect of traditional sexual association of the field and interaction between level-of-accomplishment and association of the field were significant. Female authors were evaluated more positively in female fields than in male fields, while male authors in female fields were evaluated more positively than males in male fields, by subjects of both sexes. In addition, contrary to the findings of Pheterson et al. (1971), the work of females attempting-to-accomplish were evaluated more favorably than females who have accomplished. (Author)

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The Evaluation of Feminine Professional Competence as a Function of Level of Accomplishment

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Abstract

This study extended those of Goldberg (1968) and Pheterson, Kiesler, and Goldberg (1971). College students (57 females and 39 males) were given booklets containing articles from fields of traditional male, female, and neutral sexual association for evaluation. Authors of the articles were portrayed as either males or females, and as either students (attempting to accomplish) or holders of advanced degrees (accomplished). The main effect of traditional sexual association of the field and interaction between level-of-accomplishment and association of the field were significant. Female authors were evaluated more positively in female fields than in male fields, while male authors in female fields were evaluated more positively than males in male fields, by subjects of both sexes. In addition, contrary to the findings of Pheterson et al. (1971), the work of females attempting-to-accomplish were evaluated more favorably than females who have accomplished.

The Evaluation of Feminine Professional Competence as a Function of Level of Accomplishment

Goldberg (1968) reported that college women evaluated articles allegedly written by males more positively than the identical articles attributed to a female. The devaluation of feminine work was attributed to a form of "self-prejudice" on the part of females, since feminine work was devalued not only in fields traditionally associated with males (city planning and law), and fields of neutral association (art history and linguistics), but also in fields traditionally associated with women (dietetics and elementary education). Pheterson (1969) failed to confirm the findings reported by Goldberg using a sample of middle-aged, uneducated women.

Pheterson, Kiesler, and Goldberg (1971) attempted to reconcile the divergent findings obtained in their two previous studies. They submitted paintings to female college students for evaluation. Subjects were told the artists were either males or females, and the paintings were either "contest winners" (i.e., accomplished) or a "contest entry" (i.e., attempting-to-accomplish). Results indicated women evaluated "entry paintings" by male artists to be significantly better than identical entry paintings by female artists. However sex of the artist did not affect the evaluation of the "winning" paintings. Pheterson et al. (1971) concluded that women who are "attempting-to-accomplish" are judged less favorably than men, but women who have successfully "accomplished" are evaluated as favorably

as men.

The findings of Goldberg (1968) and Pheterson et al. (1971) have not been replicated. Chobot, Goldberg, Abramson, and Abramson (1974) and Levenson, Burford, Bonno, and Davis (1975), using male and female college students, failed to find the devaluation of feminine work using the Goldberg procedure. Mischel (1974) failed to obtain the same results as Goldberg (1968) with a sample of high school students of both sexes in the U.S. and Israel, though subjects tended to prefer authors whose sex was traditionally associated with that field. Etaugh and Sanders (1974) failed to replicate the findings of Pheterson et al. (1971) with male and female subjects in that the work of accomplished females were evaluated more favorably than attempting-to-accomplish females.

The failure to replicate the findings of Goldberg (1968) and Pheterson et al. (1971) has been attributed to such factors as: a change in society's view of feminine work as a result of the impact of such things as the feminist movement, or differences in the subjects and/or articles used.

The present study was designed to link Goldberg's (1968) study conceptually with that of Pheterson et al. (1971) by investigating the effects of "level-of-accomplishment" upon the evaluation of feminine competence with male and female subjects. The original articles of Goldberg (1968) with the authors placed in conditions of "attempting-to-accomplish"(i.e., students) and "accomplished"

(i.e., holders of advanced degrees) were employed. Because of the nature of the subject population, it was felt that the holding of an advanced degree would have more salience as a sign of "accomplishment," while being a student would be more readily interpreted as "attempting-to-accomplish."

Method

Subjects

The subjects were 96 undergraduate college students (57 females and 39 males) in introductory psychology courses at a private university in Southwestern Connecticut.

Materials

Goldberg's (1968) articles were used in the present study. Two of the articles were from traditionally male-associated fields (i.e., city planning and law); two were from traditionally female-associated fields (i.e., dietetics and elementary education); and two were from fields of neutral association (i.e., art history and linguistics). The articles were placed into booklets, each booklet having all six articles.

Procedure

Subjects were tested in groups with each subject given a booklet and told to read the instructions.

Instructions for attempting-to-accomplish condition were:

"In this booklet you will find six articles, submitted to professional journals for possible publication. They

are written by six different people in six different professional fields. At the end of each article, you will find several questions which are to be answered before you proceed to the next article. You are not presumed to be sophisticated or knowledgeable in all fields. We are interested in the ability of college students to make critical evaluations of materials submitted for possible publication in professional literature. Thank you for your cooperation."

Instructions for the accomplished condition were:

"In this booklet you will find excerpts of six articles, already published in professional journals, written by six different authors in six different professional fields. At the end of each article you will find several questions which are to be answered before you proceed to the next article. You are not presumed to be sophisticated or knowledgeable in all the fields. We are interested in the ability of college students to make critical evaluations of published professional literature. Thank you for your cooperation."

After each article, there were nine questions on which the subjects were instructed to rate the article and the author along a 5-point scale: 1 (highly favorable) to 5 (highly unfavorable). These questions were identical to those used by Goldberg (1968). The questions were: (1) How valuable for the general reader would you con-

sider Mr./Miss X's article to be? (2) How valuable for the professional person in the field would you consider Mr./Miss X's article to be? (3) Quite aside from content, how effective would you judge Mr./Miss X's writing style to be? (4) Based on this article, what would you judge Mr./Miss X's professional competence to be? (5) To what extent did you agree with Mr./Miss X's point of view? (6) How profound would you judge Mr./Miss X's article to be? (7) Based on your reading of this article, what would you guess Mr./Miss X's status in his/her field to be? (8) To what extent did Mr./Miss X sway your opinion about the issues discussed in his/her article? (9) If you were to assign a grade to Mr./Miss X's article, what would it be?

The experimental manipulations were the sex of the subject, sex of the author (male vs. female), and the level of accomplishment (accomplished vs. attempting-to-accomplish). In the "accomplished" condition, the authors' names were manipulated but not followed by an advanced degree, such as "Joseph (Julie) W. Banks." The names of the authors' in the "accomplished" conditions were manipulated as in the "attempting-to-accomplish" condition; in addition, an advanced degree followed the authors' names, such as "Joseph (Julie) W. Banks, M.F.A." Therefore, for any one article, one-half of the subjects were informed the author was a male; the other half, that the author was a female. In addition, half the subjects were told that the author was a male with an advanced

degree, half that the author was a female with an advanced degree (See Table 1).

Insert Table 1 About Here

There were four sets of booklets which yielded a 2 (sex of subject) x 2 (sex of author) x 2 (level of accomplishment, i.e., accomplished or attempting-to-accomplish) x 3 (sexual association of the field, i.e., male, female, neutral) factorial design with sexual association of field nested within the sex of author factor.

Results

The evaluation score for each article was obtained by summing across questions one through seven and question nine for each subject. Question eight was eliminated because of its low test-retest reliability and item discrimination (Fugita, Panek, Balascoe & Newman, in progress).

The data were analyzed by using an analysis of variance for unequal N's fitting constants procedure (Applebaum & Cramer, 1974; Deitchman, Newman, Burkholder & Sanders, 1974; Winer, 1971).

No significant main effects were found for sex of subject (F (1,88) = 1.25, p = ns), sex of author (F (1,88) = 0.77, p = ns), and level of accomplishment (F (1,88) = 2.83, p = ns). Sexual association of the field of the article yielded a significant effect (F (4,352) = 12.84, $p < .001$), indicating that male authors tended to produce higher (poorer) mean scores for traditionally male fields

($\bar{X}$ = 20.34) than for male authors in female fields ($\bar{X}$ = 18.61); female authors yielded higher mean scores for male fields ($\bar{X}$ = 19.83) than female authors in female fields ($\bar{X}$ = 18.61) and both male ($\bar{X}$ = 23.48) and female ($\bar{X}$ = 24.05) authors writing in neutral fields received poorer scores. A significant interaction (See

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Insert Table 2 About Here

Table 2) between accomplishment of the author and sexual association of the field, (F (4,352) = 3.01, $p < .02$) was also obtained. No other significant interactions were found.

Discussion

The results of the present study failed to support the findings of Goldberg (1968) with regard to the devaluation of feminine professional work by females, and the findings of Pheterson et al. (1971) that "accomplished" females are rated better than "attempting-to-accomplish" females. In the present study, subjects of both sexes tended to evaluate the work of males in female fields more positively than the work of males in male fields, while the work of females in female fields were evaluated more positively than the work of females in male fields. With regard to female authors, these findings give support to Mischel (1974) who found that subjects of both sexes tended to prefer the work of authors who were of the sex traditionally associated with that particular professional field; but in the case of male authors, the opposite effect was

obtained.

Contrary to the findings of Pheterson et al. (1971), females "attempting-to accomplish" did not have their work devalued. In the present study just the opposite result was obtained. Raters of both sexes evaluated the work of females in the "attempting to accomplish" condition significantly better than the work of females in the "accomplished" condition, regardless of the traditional sexual association of the field. These findings suggest, perhaps, that subjects in this sample (i.e., college students) identified with the authors in the "attempting-to-accomplish" condition (i.e., students) when they made their evaluations, and viewed them more positively than when the authors were presented as professionals.

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Table 1

Experimental Conditions

Condition	Booklet	Field	Author	Prof. Degree
Attempting-to Accomplish	A	Art History	Joseph W. Banks	None
		City Planning	Harriet F. Redlich	None
		Elementary Education	Pauline L. Conger	None
		Law	Louis M. Morgan	None
		Linguistics	Joan T. McKay	None
		Dietetics	Stephen E. Hamilton	None
	B	Art History	Julie W. Banks	None
		City Planning	Harry F. Redlich	None
		Elementary Education	Paul L. Conger	None
		Law	Lydia M. Morgan	None
		Linguistics	John T. McKay	None
		Dietetics	Stella E. Hamilton	None
Accomplished	C	Art History	Jose[illegible] W. Banks	M.F.A.
		City Planning	Harriet F. Redlich	B.Arch.
		Elementary Education	Pauline L. Conger	Ed.D
		Law	Louis M. Morgan	J.D.
		Linguistics	Joan T. McKay	Ph.D
		Dietetics	Stephen E. Hamilton	MD
	D	Art History	Julie W. Banks	M.F.A.
		City Planning	Harry F. Redlich	B.Arch.
		Elementary Education	Paul L. Conger	Ed.D
		Law	Lydia M. Morgan	J.D.
		Linguistics	John T. McKay	Ph.D
		Dietetics	Stella E. Hamilton	MD

Table 2

Mean Scores of Articles[1]

Traditional Association of Field

		Neutral	Male	Female
Accomplished Authors	Male	24.13	21.30	19.12
	Female	24.68	21.56	19.30
Attempting to Accomplish Authors	Male	22.46	19.25	18.11
	Female	23.10	17.75	17.96

[1] Lower score indicates better rating